

The only written record of the trip that has been preserved was in the journal of John Crook. He wrote:

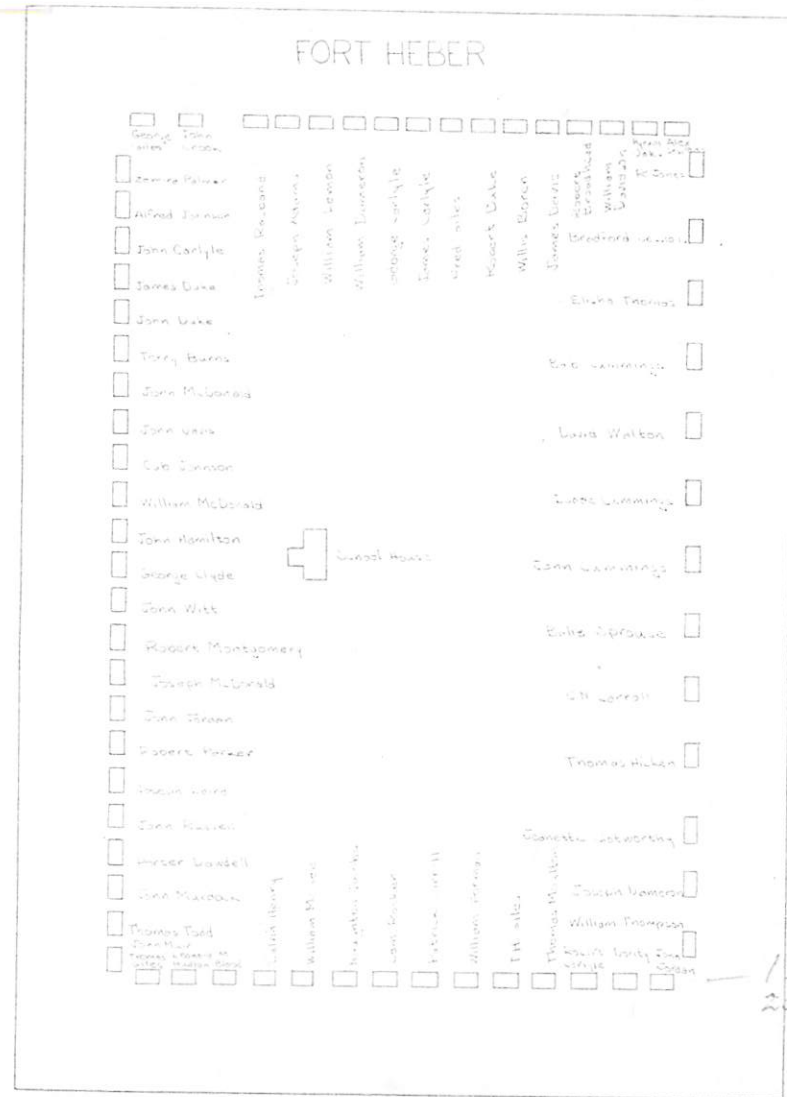
"April 30, 1859, we camped at a snowslide in Provo Canyon that night. The next morning we pulled our wagons to pieces and carried them to the top of the snowslide which was about a quarter of a mile wide. Our May Day excursion consisted of traveling on up the canyon from the snowslide to William Wall's ranch where we camped. The next day we crossed Daniels' Creek on the ice. There were heavy drifts of snow behind the willow bushes. We thought we were the first settlers to arrive in the valley that Spring, but when we reached the present site of Heber we saw two teams plowing north of us which proved to be William Davidson plowing with two yoke of oxen and Robert Broadhead and James Davis with a similar outfit between them. We found that William Davidson had his family here, which I believe was the first family in the valley."

Exchanging greetings with the men whom they found already in the valley, the group went on to a spring about a mile north of the present site of Heber. They made their camp here, as John Crook notes in his journal, because this was considered the best land in the valley. As their camp was the largest in the valley and most of them originally had come from Great Britain, they called it London. The spring by which they camped still retains that name.

The first order of business was for each man to claim his section of land, either 20 or 40 acres, and begin as quickly as possible to prepare the ground for planting. Much of the earth was covered with sagebrush, which proved very thick and hard to clear. Yet with a prayer in their hearts and a song of faith on their lips they cleared away the brush and planted not only the seeds of new crops but also the seeds of new homes and a new valley for themselves and those they loved.

As the crops were being planted the men camped in tents or in the wagons, but they soon spent some of their time in laying out a townsite and building log houses. They decided to build closer together in a fort so they could protect themselves from Indians if that became necessary. They selected the northwest corner of the townsite for the fort string of huts.

About the middle of June, 1859, Jesse Fuller, deputy county surveyor of Utah County, commenced a survey of the London townsite. The initial point was established at the north end of what is now Main Street. The first line was run along the west side of Main Street, the blocks being made 24 rods square and the streets five rods wide. Each block was divided into four lots, 12 rods square. A tract of eight blocks south and five and one-half blocks west of the initial point was laid off into blocks and lots forming a rectangle about three-fourths of a mile long and one-half mile wide. This formed the west half of the townsite. The east half was similarly laid off some months later, leaving Main Street seven rods wide.



Old Fort Heber showing the locations of the families who built their homes there in 1859.

The area for the fort was 80 rods square, lying between what is now First West and Fourth West Streets and 2nd North and 5th North Streets.

Within that fort area the company of men built their houses close together, with sufficient openings to let their stock in and out. The houses were built with green cottonwood logs that were cut on the river bottoms.



When the hall was to be used for dances, the sawdust would be swept up and the floor polished. There was ample room for six or eight sets of "The National Quadrille," or the "Rage Quadrille," which were very popular dances at the time. Other dances were the Schottische, the Jewel, Two-step and the waltz. A splendid orchestra provided music in the Opera House and was composed entirely of local musicians. Mrs. Minnie Tilt Turner played the huge Chickering grand piano and could make it ring throughout the hall. Andrew (Andy) Anderson was on the violin with Moroni (Rone) Morris, clarinetist, Adolphia R. Duke, trombonist and Clyde Willis on the cornet.

In later years the Turner Opera House, built between 2nd and 3rd N. Main, was sold by John Turner's family, used for bowling, skating and a garage, and then it was destroyed by fire.

It would be difficult to name all those who performed in early Heber theatres, but some of the more prominent in the years before or around 1900 were Elisha Averett Sr., Amelia Clegg Montgomery, Livingston Montgomery, Edward D. Clyde, Henry M. Aird, William Buys, Mr. and Mrs. James Duke, Mr. and Mrs. John Duke, Robert and Annie Duke, Mr. and Mrs. John Hamilton, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Luke, John Brook Sr., Richard Jones, Ira Jacobs, Jemima Palmer, Mr. and Mrs. Wil-



One of the outstanding early dramatic productions was "Nathan Hale," produced in 1910. The cast, pictured here, included, front row, left to right, Arthur Olson, Reta Brock, Henry Raile, Clayton Montgomery, Mona Wilcox, Orson Ryan and O. A. Whitaker. Back row, J. W. Robinson, D. A. Broadbent, Mr. Hansen, Florence Billings, O. A. Whitaker, James Johnson, Attewall Wootton Jr., Jowett Fortie and Naomi Duke. Some of the cast were faculty members of the high school.



A local dramatic group who performed the play "Uncle Josh" in 1912 included: Back row, left to right, DeVera Smith, O. A. Whitaker, F. Clayton Montgomery, James Johnson, E. Parley Cliff, Charles Bronson. Front row, Loretta Neff, William Harvey, Charles DeGraff and Charles Broadbent.

liam Davidson, Sarah Cummings, Richard Smith, Emma Carlile, Mr. and Mrs. John Gallagher, Golda Johnson, John Jordan, C. N. Carroll, Amanda Smith, Joseph Cluff and the Lindsay boys, Robert and William.

By the early 1900's the schools of Heber, particularly the high school, had begun dramatic productions and there was no longer the need for separate community productions. Dramatic work at Wasatch High School has always been of the highest caliber and many students have learned a deep love for the theatre through their participation in school productions.

One of the more outstanding dramatic endeavors outside the schools was a group of three "esthetic entertainers" who called themselves the "Pertheorso." The three, Orson Ryan, Pearl Buys and Theodore Benjamin Miller, appeared in reading recitals throughout the valley. A 1908 handbill advertised them as a group offering impersonations, character sketches, imitations and sparkling dialogue, with touches of sunshine, pathos, laughter, shadow, joy, tears and gems from popular and classic drama.

Particularly noteworthy in their contributions to drama in the community are Charles DeGraff, who has done much through the MIA drama program, and Loreta Neff who has been a popular dramatic director in the area.



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